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STATE FOR NEA/ARP AND DRL
STATE PASS USTR FOR J. BUNTIN, A. ROSENBERG, AND L. KARESH
DOL FOR J. SHEA, B. SHEPARD, AND J. RUDE
US MISSION GENEVA FOR LABOR ATTACHE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [ELAB](#) [ETRD](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [MU](#)
SUBJECT: ILO DELIVERS WORKSHOP ON FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION
AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

SUMMARY

¶1. A three-day workshop entitled "Freedom of Association and Social Dialogue" began July 1 for members of Oman's 43 representative committees, educating them on the role of labor unions. Experts from the International Labor Organization (ILO), the Arab Labor Organization (ALO) and from other Gulf labor unions will facilitate the various sessions on social dialogue, collective bargaining, and right to strike. End Summary.

Workshop to Educate Workers on Collective Bargaining

¶2. Oman's national umbrella labor organization, the Main Representative Committee (MRC), with its co-sponsor the Arab Labor Organization (ALO), began a three-day workshop July 1 for Omani union members to learn about international concepts and practices of collective bargaining, the right to strike, and enhancing freedom of union organization. Over 100 employers, employees, and government officials from the committees, the Ministry of Manpower (MOM), the Arab Labor Organization (ALO), and the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) attended the opening ceremony on July 1. Speaking at the opening were MRC President Abd al-Athim Abbas

and Assistant Director General of the ALO, Khalid bin Abd al-Wahab al-Balushi.

¶3. The Under Secretary of Manpower, Sayyid Hamad bin Hilal al-Busa'idi, told the audience that workshops such as these are part of the government's overall goal to "update labor criteria and modernize labor legislation in line with the international and Arab labor agreements and conventions." He praised the MRC's efforts to raise awareness about the duties and rights of workers in accordance with international labor standards.

¶4. Vice President of the MRC, Saud bin Ali al-Jabri, told reporters that while the MRC has been active in skills-building and outreach, he hopes to see more tangible achievements in the next year. Al-Jabri said that the establishment of workers' committees and the MRC ensures that there will be somebody who is going to "stand and represent those workers whose rights are not considered or are violated by employers."

COMMENT

¶5. Although the MRC has performed significant outreach to employers and committees, this is the first workshop organized by the MRC with the explicit goal of educating workers on international practices for collective bargaining and striking. The workshops will provide a much needed foundation and boost for the committees as decrees from the MOM on these topics are issued over the coming four months, in keeping with Oman's Free Trade Agreement commitments to the U.S. Congress.
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